

Exhibit No. 7Date 3-25-09Bill No. AB 2

March 25, 2009
Senate Finance and Claims
Terry Kendrick – 459-9440

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Terry Kendrick and I am here on behalf of the Montana Indian Education Association. The Montana Indian Education Association urges you to restore funding to ensure the educational success of at-risk students and to continue the important work of Indian Education for All.

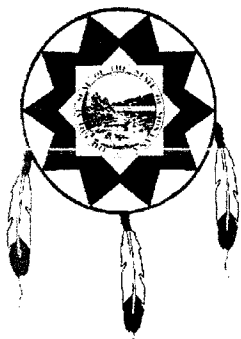
As you know, receiving a good education is the best way to get out of poverty. I hope you will ensure that schools receive funding specifically for the purpose of improving the academic achievement of at-risk students. Please restore the \$10 million in funding for at-risk students.

Another important component in Montana's educational system is Indian Education for All Act. The act ensures that all Montana's students learn about the heritage and contributions of Native people. Right now, schools are receiving \$30.00 cents per ANB. The amount proposed in HB 2 is \$20.00 per ANB. We request that you restore the funding to the current level of \$30 per ANB.

Montana is a national leader in Indian Education for All. I wish you had had the opportunity to hear from the teachers and students who testified on behalf of funding Indian Education for all. You would have heard and seen the energy, excitement, and commitment from the teachers and students who have experienced Indian Education for All in the schools.

IEA is in the constitution, it's in statute and it's in the court decision of the definition of a quality education. We've only had this vitally important component of a quality education funded for four years. Now is not the time to go backwards.

Thank you



**MONTANA
AMERICAN
INDIAN CAUCUS**

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PHONE: 406.444.1634
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SENATE MEMBERS:

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JONATHAN WINDY BOY
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CAUCUS STAFF:

ADRIAN MAIN
JASON SMITH

March 4, 2009

The Honorable Jon Sesso, Chair, and Members of the House Appropriations Committee

Rep. Cynthia Hiner	Rep. Walter McNutt	Rep. Duane Ankney
Rep. Dennis Getz	Rep. William Glaser	Rep. Ray Hawk
Rep. Teresa Henry	Rep. Roy Hollandsworth	Rep. Dan Villa
Rep. Galen Hollenbaugh	Rep. Llew Jones	Rep. Dave Kasten
Rep. Bill McChesney	Rep. Robert Mehlhoff	Rep. Penny Morgan
Rep. Carolyn Pease-Lopez	Rep. Cheryl Steenson	Rep. Don Roberts

Dear Chairman Sesso:

The American Indian Caucus is in full support of HB 550 (Sands) which supports increased funding for Indian Education for All.

Indian Education for All is a critical component of a quality education that was defined in 2005 by the Montana Legislature as directed by the Court. It is also one of the only constitutionally directed educational programs for our educational systems.

Article X, 1 (2) - The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indian and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.

It has been a long time effort to finally secure funding for this constitutional promise made in 1972 with funding provided for the first time in 2005. We have only been working on this effort for 3 school years (since 2006-07) and have seen some wonderful progress has been made by teachers throughout Montana integrating in history and contributions of American Indians in their classrooms for all students. This has only been possible because of funding provided by the Legislature.

The current proposed funding level for distribution to schools is \$20.40 per ANB. We certainly appreciate the efforts of the administration in bringing life to Indian Education to All in 2005, but this is not sufficient to continue in this work. We need professional development, curriculum development, and materials. Books alone cost much more than \$20.00 each.

We certainly recognize the fiscal issues of Montana, but urge you to find some way in resources available to provide this additional funding for Indian Education for All.

Sincerely,

Shannon Augare
Margaret Campbell
Carolyn Pease-Lopez
Tony Belcourt
Danny Stewart
Peregoy

Montana Democratic Women's Legislative Caucus

3533 Lincoln Hills Pt.
Missoula, MT 59802

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Legislative Intern

Lori Haverly-Ramesz

Senate Finance & Claims Committee

March 25, 2009

Support for restoring funding to Indian Education for All

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, the 31 members of the Montana Democratic Women's Legislative Caucus urge your support of restoring funding to Indian Education for All. While this important component of Montana's education system was included in the constitution in 1972, it has only been funded since 2005. In 2005 the funding was \$68.00 per ANB, in 2007 it was \$30.00 per ANB and it is currently budgeted to be \$20.40 per ANB.

There have been great accomplishments in these past four years throughout Montana class rooms. Teachers are receiving training, materials are being developed, and students are learning about Montana's tribal nations. But, we cannot reduce funding and expect this to continue – we must provide the resources to make sure Indian Education for all is a solid part of an education for all Montana students.

We know these are hard economic times and you have difficult decisions to make but it is critical to the future of our state that we all understand and acknowledge the American Indian heritage of Montana as our constitutional delegates intended.

Our schools need adequate funding to continue this critical work.

Respectfully,

Senator Carol Juneau
Co-chair

Representative Diane Sands
Co-chair

Letters of Support Indian Education for All Senate Finance & Claims

Dear Committee Member: Please support HB 550, carried by Rep. Sands. I am a parent of children who attend our K-12 Public Schools and Indian Education for All is a very important part of what I want my children to learn. It is important that our students learn about all people of Montana and their contributions to our history, arts, sciences, and other aspects of Montana. We will have better schools because of Indian Education for All. I understand there is only \$20.40 in the budget now per student. This is not sufficient - please support an increase to \$40.00 per student.

MaryRose Morigeau
Bookstore Manager
Salish Kootenai College
PO Box 70, 58138 US Hwy 93
Pablo, MT 59855
406-275-4722 / 406-275-4721
Fax # 406-275-4818
maryrose_morigeau@skc.edu

Please include my name in support for HB 550

Myrna Kuka
American Indian Liaison
1539 11th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1301
Phone (406) 444-0403
Cell: 799-1333
Email: mkuka@mt.gov

Dear Committee Member:

Please support HB 550, carried by Rep. Sands, which will provide additional funding for Indian Education for All. Currently the Governor's budget includes \$20.40 per student and this is not enough to continue this important work in Montana's schools. HB 550 asks this be increased to \$40.00 per student. Montana has only provided funding for Indian Education for All for four years even though the constitution called for it in 1972. We have just begun and can't go backwards! Please support HB 550 - it will make Montana a better place for all students.

Thank you,
Lennie Webster
Research Associate
School of Public and Community Health Sciences
University of Montana
Phone: (406) 275-4831
Fax: (406) 275-4804
Email: Lennie_Webster@skc.edu

March 10, 2009

Dear Committee Member:

This letter is a request for you to support HB 550 carried by Rep. Sands. I am the parent and grandparent of children who attend both K-12 public schools and college. Indian Education for All is an extremely important part of what I want my children/grandchildren to learn. It is important that all of our children learn about all people of Montana and what they contributed to the history, arts and sciences of this great state we call Montana. Currently the Governor's budget includes \$20.40 per student and HB550 asks this to be increased to \$40.00 per student. Please help Montana schools provide the quality of education all of our children deserve.

Respectfully,

Joan M. Colman

204 Adams Street SE

Ronan, MT. 59864

"Dear Committee Member: Please support HB 550, carried by Rep. Sands, which will provide additional funding for Indian Education for All. Currently the Governor's budget includes \$20.40 per student and this is not enough to continue this important work in Montana's schools. HB 550 asks this be increased to \$40.00 per student. Montana has only provided funding for Indian Education for All for four years even though the constitution called for it in 1972. We have just begun and can't go backwards! Please support HB 550 - it will make Montana a better place for all students."

*Rusty Martin, Principal
Riverside Middle School
Billings, MT*

Dear Committee Member: Please support HB 550, carried by Rep. Sands, which will provide additional funding for Indian Education for All. Currently the Governor's budget includes \$20.40 per student and this is not enough to continue this important work in Montana's schools. HB 550 asks this be increased to \$40.00 per student. Montana has only provided funding for Indian Education for All for four years even though the constitution called for it in 1972. We have just begun and can't go backwards! Please support HB 550 - it will make Montana a better place for all students. This is not only an Indian concern but a concern for all Montanans. If any Montanan does not receive an excellent education which knowledge and understanding of our state and history, then we all lose. I wish you success on this important bill.

Tobie Weist Missoula

Dear Committee Members:

As an educator, a parent and a proud Montanan, I am asking for your complete **support** of **HB 550** presented by Representative Diane Sands. I am well aware that finances are tight, but I believe that a \$20 increase per student is an excellent investment. Investing in our children, youth, education and the future of this state is a great place for additional funding to go. Funding "Indian Education For All" was long overdue, but it does no good to look back. Right now teachers in every district are receiving the professional development needed to provide them with the background knowledge and confidence to "teach" about the natives of this state. All students are enjoying this positive change in the curriculum. We've got it right! Please don't let IEFA stagnate because of the economy. Thank you so much for the work you do. Please vote for HB 550.


Sincerely,
Marcia Beaumont
School Counselor
Riverside Middle School
Billings, MT

Dear House Appropriations Committee Member:

Please support HB 550, carried by Rep. Sands. I am a parent of a child who attends our K-12 Public Schools and Indian Education for All is a very important part of what I want my child to learn. It is important that our students learn about all people of Montana and their contributions to our history, arts, sciences, and other aspects of Montana. We will have better schools because of Indian Education for All. I understand there is only \$20.40 in the budget now per student. This is not sufficient - please support an increase to \$40.00 per student.

Susette Billedeaux

Dear House Appropriations Committee Member: Please support HB 550, carried by Rep. Sands. As the Chairperson of the Lane Deer Indian Education Committee and a parent of children who attend our K-12 Public Schools and Indian Education for All is a very important part of what I want my children to learn. It is important that our students learn about all people of Montana and their contributions to our history, arts, sciences, and other aspects of Montana. We will have better schools because of Indian Education for All. I understand there is only \$20.40 in the budget now per student. This is not sufficient - please support an increase to \$40.00 per student.

Sincerely,
 Paula A. (Littlehead) Wolf Black
Administrative Assistant/Travel Coord.
(406) 477-6215 ext. 114

Dear Reps. Pease-Lopez and Sesso,

My name is Doug Ruhman. I am a faculty member at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo. I have been a classroom teacher for 21 years, and I am currently involved in teacher training at SKC in the Education Department. Our bachelors degree program in elementary education is the first new K-8 teacher training program approved by the state in decades, and the first 4-year licensing program at a tribal college in Montana. I am honored and proud to work as an instructor at SKC.

Besides instructing courses to upcoming student teachers, I am responsible for placing our students in K-12 classrooms here on the Reservation for practicum and student teaching. In this capacity I have been fortunate to be in many different grade levels and classrooms over the past several years. Since Indian Education for All clarified the constitutional directive to include the unique cultural heritage of Montana's Indian people in school curricula, I have seen substantial inroads towards improved awareness and cooperation with regard to Indian education, especially in and around Reservation communities. Relations between Native families and the schools that serve their children have improved, and non-Indian teachers are now beginning to get over the fear and uncertainty which characterized the first years of IEFA. In the short time since OPI was given the means to support curriculum development through IEFA, amazing materials have been produced and made available to students, teachers, and parents. What this legislation has accomplished both in terms of student knowledge and with relations between tribal and school communities has been very encouraging. This is particularly observable in Indian Country, but much less so in Montana's mostly non-Indian communities. With increased funding, the full promise of IEFA can be expanded and made more accessible to all of Montana's children- in keeping with the intent and spirit of the legislation.

That much has been accomplished with IEFA- given its relatively meager appropriation- is a testimonial to the resolve and dedication of Montana's education community. With the increased funding level proposed by Rep. Sands' HB 550, Montana educators at all levels can really go to the next level and see to it that our schools meet and exceed their constitutional and ethical responsibility to address Indian education issues. Further curricular materials can be developed and older ones refined to better address the ever-changing standards that exist in the education world.

I urge you to support HB 550 because we have worked so hard to set good work in motion, and now more than ever we need to see to it that our state's commitment to Indian education becomes a norm, not just a one time notion.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Doug Ruhman

Faculty, Education Department

Salish Kootenai College

P.O. Box 70

Pablo, MT 59855

(406)275-4763 (office)

(406)249-6534 (cell)

doug_ruhman@skc.edu

Dear Representative Sesso,

It is my understanding that tomorrow, Representative Diane Sands will be presenting HB 550 to increase funding for Indian Education for All from \$20.40 to \$40.00/student. Please support HB 550. Although we are appreciative of the \$20.40, it is not enough to continue this important work in Montana's schools. Originally enacted in 1972, Montana has only provided funding for Indian Education for All for the last four years. This work is extremely important to create better and more understanding citizens in our great state. There is much more work to be done and we cannot afford to go backwards. Your support of this Bill will facilitate the creation of better and more informed citizens for all of Montana. I have had experience in the implementation of this Montana Constitutional requirement both in the mid-1970's as well as presently. I totally support this bill and respectfully request your support, too.

Sincerely,

Carmen Cornelius Taylor (Salish tribal affiliation)
Executive Direction
National Indian School Board Association
PO Box 790
Polson, MT 59860

Dear House Appropriations Committee Member: Please support HB 550, carried by Rep. Sands, which will provide additional funding for Indian Education for All. Currently the Governor's budget includes \$20.40 per student and this is not enough to continue this important work in Montana's schools. HB 550 asks this be increased to \$40.00 per student. Montana has only provided funding for Indian Education for All for four years even though the constitution called for it in 1972. We have just begun and can't go backwards! Please support HB 550 - it will make Montana a better place for all students.

Dr. Lorelei A. Lambert, PhD, DS, RN
Medical Ecology/Anthropology
e-Learning Team/ Faculty Trainer
Salish Kootenai College
PO Box 70
Pablo, MT 59855

Browning Public Schools

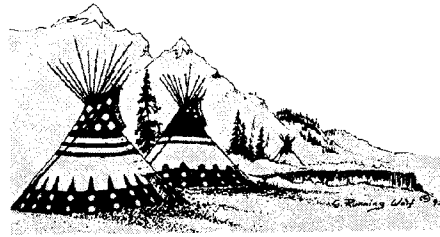
Blackfeet Native American Studies

129 1st Ave S.E.

P.O. BOX 610

Browning, MT 59417

Phone: 406-338-2715 · Fax: 406-338-2708



Dear House Appropriation Member:

Please support HB 550 carried by Representative Sands. As Director of the Blackfeet Native American Studies Department for the Browning Public School District 9, it has been rewarding to work with curricula that reflects the history, language and culture of our tribal nations in Montana. My teachers and students love the lessons that they teach and learn from plus they are building much more knowledge about their Indian neighbors because of Indian Education for All. We need adequate, sustained funding to conduct teacher training and to provide materials in order to do this work in our classrooms.

Thank You,

Marilyn Bullshoe, Director
Blackfeet Native American Studies Dept.